

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1, after the title, insert the following heading:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

On page 1, lines 1-3, please amend the paragraph to read as follows:

The invention relates to a spray cover or hatch cover for boats, particularly kayaks, having a pull element that is a circumferential elastic band provided at the edge of the cover for simple release of the cover at the collar (coaming) projecting above the boat body and surrounding the aperture to be covered based on the overall concept of Patent Claim 1.

On page 3, before line 1, insert the following heading:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

On page 5, lines 6-8, please amend the paragraph to read as follows:

This objective is achieved by the invention by means of the a spray cover or hatch cover, wherein the pull element is a tightening strap that can be expanded by hand only with great difficulty and wherein the pull element includes at least one manually-operable tightening device for tightening the strap described in Patent Claim 1, whereby advantageous embodiments derive from the Dependent Claims.

On page 4, lines 11-23, to page 5, lines 1-6, please
amend the paragraph to read as follows:

Two tightening devices are preferably inserted into the tightening strap. Depending on the tightening device design and the depth of the coaming channel, it is possible that one tightening device is not adequate to lengthen the tightening strap adequately so that it may be conveniently stretched over the upper edge of the coaming and placed into the channel in the coaming. Also, two tightening devices provide a safety function, particularly when they are positioned ~~per Claim 3~~ along the travel direction of the boat, one each at the front and rear ends of the cover. Kayaks suffer so-called jam accidents in which the boat is

Kayaks suffer so-called jam accidents in which the boat is trapped under an obstacle such as a rock either by its keel or its deck. The rescuer who tries to extract the kayaker in such a situation must be able to release the spray cover, and thus requires access to at least one tightening device, which is almost always the case in the this embodiment based on ~~Claim 3~~. Of course, each individual tightening device must be so adjusted for this situation that the spray cover is completely free of the coaming with one open tightening device, thus allowing its removal.

On page 7, lines 17-23, to page 8, lines 1-10, please
amend the paragraph to read as follows:

If a boat capsizes, the kayaker must be able to free him/herself spontaneously with no problem even when panicked, which requires release of the spray cover. With conventional spray covers, this occurs simply in that the kayaker sitting in the boat presses with his legs against the spray cover, thus pulling the elastic pull element from the coaming. Configuration of the spray cover according to the invention ~~per Claim 9~~ allows the same semi-reflexive

release of the spray cover in that the kayaker presses his/her knees indirectly against the release mechanism of at least one tightening device and/or adjusting device by means of the release mechanism provided on the upper side of the spray cover. The release device ~~per Claim 10~~ preferably includes a release band that stretches across the thigh or knee of the person sitting under spray cover that reproduces the upward movement of the legs, and ~~per Claim 11~~, transfers it by means of at least one pull strap to the release mechanism so that the fastener opens and releases the tightening strap.

On page 9, lines 16-23, to page 10, lines 1-5, please
amend the paragraph to read as follows:

In use position of the spray cover, one or the other tightening device for the tightening strap lies within the channel in the coaming. If it is particularly deep, it may simplify operation to assign a formed piece to each tightening device ~~per Claim 18~~ that lies between the tightening device and coaming that determines a specific position for the tightening device relative to the coaming

in which the tightening device is easy to operate and/or in which the pull of the above-mentioned release device is particularly easily accessible. These shaped pieces may be of foamed plastic, for example. Separate formed pieces allow the use of conventional tightening devices. Alternatively, the tightening devices may also have a shape that is matched to the contour of the coaming.

On page 10, delete lines 6-8 and insert the following paragraph and heading:

~~In the following, the invention is described in greater advantageous detail by the use of schematically represented embodiments, which show:~~

For a full understanding of the present invention, reference should now be made to the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

On page 10, lines 9-19, please amend the paragraphs to read as follows:

Figure 1 shows a kayak with spray cover based on the invention in oblique view;_.

Figure 2 is a top view of the spray cover;_.

Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view through the edge of the spray cover;_.

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view through the coaming of the kayak with spray cover in position;_.

Figure 5 is a top view of a section of the spray cover with tensioner and adjusting device;_.

Figure 6 is a cross-sectional view along the projection 6-6 in Figure 5;_.

On page 11, lines 1-2, please amend the paragraph to read as follows:

Figure 7 is a top view of a section of another spray cover with ratcheting strap and pump clasp7.

On page 11, after line 4, insert the following heading and paragraph:

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to Figs. 1-8 of the drawings. Identical elements in the various figures are designated with the same reference numerals.

On page 17, after the last line, please insert the following paragraph:

There has thus been shown and described a novel spray cover which fulfills all the objects and advantages sought therefor. Many changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications of the subject invention will, however, become apparent to those skilled in the art after considering this specification and the accompanying drawings

which disclose the preferred embodiments thereof. All such changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention are deemed to be covered by the invention, which is to be limited only by the claims which follow.